

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson**

### ***Markup of H.R. 1417 - the Border Security Results Act***

May 15, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee markup of H.R. 1417, the “Border Security Results Act of 2013”:

“As an original cosponsor of the bill, I and appreciate the process that has gotten us to this point. The bipartisan work done by the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee should be a model in the Congress.

Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Jackson Lee are to be commended for their collaborative approach. I also appreciate Chairman McCaul’s openness to working with me to strengthen the bill.

Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. Appropriations for immigration enforcement has increased by about 50 percent and funding for border security-related activities has risen from about \$7.9 billion in Fiscal Year 2006 to \$11.7 billion in Fiscal Year 2012.

During my time on this Committee, I have consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

I am pleased that H.R. 1417 requires the Department to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. This bill, while not as comprehensive in scope as I might like, does represent a significant step forward.

The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas within two years. I understand that we anticipate an amendment from the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Smith, which sets a goal of achieving operational control of the entire southwest border within in five years.

We all know that for DHS to achieve operational control, substantial new resources, including border security personnel, technology, and infrastructure will need to be provided.

You do not need to be a Member of Congress to know that new resources can be secured in one of three ways - new appropriations, a diversion of resources from somewhere else in the budget, or new fees.

The underlying bill does not address any of these three avenues to ensure that DHS has the resources it needs.

Therefore, it falls to us to address the funding question. I plan to do so by offering an amendment to authorize an additional \$3 BILLION in appropriations for the Department to dedicate to this endeavor.

Secretary Napolitano has indicated in testimony before the Senate that this funding would be necessary for, at least, the initial phase of these border security efforts.

In the absence of new funding, DHS would be forced to divert other vital homeland security resources to border security in order to achieve operational control, which could create other security vulnerabilities.

That would be unacceptable.

My colleague from New Jersey, Rep. Payne, plans to offer an amendment today to ensure that the Department does not cannibalize security at ports of entry to achieve operational control between the ports of entry.

As for fees, my colleague from New York, Mr. Higgins, is expected to offer language that addresses the third avenue for funding— new fees.

His amendment states that DHS should not look to new crossing fees for land borders as a funding stream.

On the whole, I believe the measure before the Committee today advances the effort to have a sound strategy and implementation plan guiding the Department's border security efforts, which will ultimately help move the Department toward achieving operational control of the southern border.

That is why I will support the "Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute" today. However, I also encourage my colleagues to carefully consider the amendments offered, particularly those related to resources.

Talk is cheap, but achieving operational control of the America's borders won't be."

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